



A Measure of Grace

February 2004
Volume 8, Issue 2

A Publication of Where Grace Abounds

Protecting Ourselves— Really?

By Mary Heathman

A WGA Survivors of Abuse group just started a few weeks ago. As background for the group, the four men and four women have read Dan Allender's book, The Wounded Heart, and will spend the next six months meeting weekly to discuss the ongoing effects of childhood abuse in their lives. As part of the process, we will also share together the hopes and longings we have for becoming whole persons, and praying for one another. The first three weeks will be spent building trust and sharing our stories.

One of the themes in the stories of all survivors of childhood abuse is how they have developed relating styles to protect themselves from further hurt. The current SOA group members are no exception. In personal discussions with several of them,

(Continued on page 2)

Where Grace Abounds
P.O. Box 18871
Denver, Colorado 80218

Office: 303/863-7757
Fax: 303/863-7769

email: Wwga@aol.com
www.wheregraceabounds.org

Inside this issue:

Protecting Ourselves...	1
Introducing...	4
Reflections	5
January Activities	8
Upcoming Events	8

(Protecting Ourselves... continued from page 1)

they have shared with me how they have been impacted by their reading. As one member put it, "It was as if Allender followed me around, taking notes. He nailed me!"

Although not a comfortable feeling, that experience of being "nailed" is an important part of healing. When we read or hear something that so closely hits home and describes how we think and feel we realize that we aren't so alone—that someone else understands. Hope wells up as light suddenly shines on places we never thought anyone would understand, least of all ourselves. In that light, after we get over squirming in embarrassment or conviction, we can find guidance and direction for the way out.

For WGA group members, much understanding and hope is found in The Wounded Heart.

One of the chapters describes how we have developed a style of relating which functions as a coping mechanism to protect us from further harm. Unfortunately, sometimes the coping mechanism becomes a problem in and of itself. Dan Allender has said, "past damage will inevitably show itself in one's style of relating to others, in order to protect oneself from further hurt, powerlessness, betrayal etc."

Allender has identified three self-protective styles of relating that often develop in response to unresolved sexual abuse. He calls these the **Good Girl, Tough Girl, and Party Girl**. Since the relating styles can be readily applied across gender lines, I have adapted Allender's concepts for men and women and quoted him directly:

Goodie Two Shoes

These people come across as a "house with the lights on, but no one home." They are the "nice guys/gals" of the relating styles, as they place a high priority on helping other people. Keeping peace and avoiding conflict are two of their main goals. They almost never let anyone, even themselves, know they are angry, for they feel guilty for the anger itself. In fact, any emotion

perceived as negative will be suppressed. They tell themselves they are overreacting or they push themselves to forgive before they even know what the offense is. Goodie Two Shoes like their environment to be organized and in good order, including all their relationships, but they rarely feel they have the chaos in order. They tend to be busy up to, and often beyond, their

(Continued on page 3)

*When we read or
hear something
that so closely hits
home and de-
scribes how we
think and feel we
realize that we
aren't so alone—
that someone else
understands.*

(Protecting Ourselves... continued from page 2)

real capacity, avoid asking for help, and are critical of themselves. They are good listeners and generally quiet, not troublemakers.

Goodie Two Shoes in recovery programs, given the chance to describe themselves, will say something like, "Since I could never rely upon those closest to me to provide emotional support, I learned to do it myself. I became very competent and disciplined and learned to cover my bases in case the unexpected occurred. My self-contempt also motivated me to try hard to meet the expectations of others so that I would not be found lacking or inadequate."

Toughies

These men and women live behind thick impenetrable walls. Classic, take-charge, task-oriented, no-nonsense ramrods, they are committed to the exercise of power through control and intimidation. They view their longings as sentimental, sloppy, and/or weak, and hate to be dependent on people. In sexual relationships, they feel more powerful than desirable, and sometimes fantasize about dominating their partners. With their heightened sense of discernment, they can usually tell when people are being dishonest or untrustworthy, and are suspicious when complimented, wondering what the flatterer is after. When challenged, Toughies are willing to go toe to toe with anyone to accomplish what they think is right, and they lose their tem-

pers frequently. They tend to be verbally aggressive or sarcastic to overpower anyone that they perceive is threatening them. Toughies are valued for their competence and can be wonderfully pleasant, but people know they'll be sorry if they "cross the line."

Toughies, when describing their attitudes, will say something like, "Being a needy little kid is ugly. Vulnerability is repulsive. People ought to keep their neediness private, as one would a heinous sin. Weakness is despicable, demeaning, death."

Partiers

These easy-going, "good-time Charlies," are sometimes intense, sometimes inconsistent, hard to read, because they can be good, then tough, then fragile. You can count on them to be unpredictable and have moderate or even wild mood swings. Though they are easily hurt, they feel it is pointless to dwell on hurts. They take things out of context or mishear them. Sometimes whiny, sometimes bold, they often feel very afraid, but at other times surprisingly brave. They are fickle and not good at keeping long-term relationships. When a relationship starts to get too close, they want to end it, so they sabotage the relationship by pulling away, causing conflict, doing something disloyal, or getting attracted to someone else. Partiers feel uncomfortable with commitment, so they

(Continued on page 6)

Introducing a New WGA Staff Member:

Meet Pat Bott!

By Scott Kingry



As the staff began to plan for ministry in 2004, we were spread even thinner due to our loss of staff member Karen Wood.

I felt a bit overwhelmed by the

prospect of the heavier workload that awaited us. The New Year cranked into high gear as our counseling hours increased, big seminars got on the drawing board and our speaking schedule flew off the charts. Luckily, our hankies were barely dry from shedding tears over Karen's leaving, when God chose to fill the vacancy far sooner than any of us expected. Let me introduce you to new WGA staff member, Pat Bott.

Pat has been in and around WGA for many years. Mary and I first met her when we were doing in-service training on the issue of homosexuality for a Christian hotline. Little did we know then that Pat's heart beat so closely with the mission of Where Grace Abounds. She had many close friends struggling in the areas of homosexuality, AIDS and sexual abuse. As a busy single mom of three, Pat would frequently tell us, not only about her love for the people but that when her kids were grown and more self sufficient, she wanted to become

more involved in the actual ministry aspects of WGA.

Soon, the said children were grown and suddenly Pat was everywhere to be seen. She was a loving presence to the men and women at every Thursday night group, took notes at intercessory payer and if there was any type of fun event, Pat was there with bells on. Eventually, Pat joined the WGA leadership team and became a small group leader.

In November of 2003, after 6 years of employment with Vectra Bank, she was laid off and Pat felt that was a signal from God. Pat started chatting with Mary about a calling she was feeling to join staff. After much praying and chatting, at the January Board Meeting, Pat was approved as a new staff member for Where Grace Abounds. Pat now finally has an opportunity fulfill a desire she has carried for years.

Please join the WGA staff, Leadership and Board in welcoming Pat, as she joins me in the Program department. Her role which will include counseling, groups, speaking and just plain doing what Where Grace Abounds does best...drawing alongside and loving people.



Reflections: Thoughts From a WGA Leader

By Patrick Maschka

Come to me, all you who are weary (Matthew 11:28)

good fight of the

Adventures in a world of fantasy that I create with my thoughts have been a part of my reality for much of my life. As a youngster, I can recall times of wishing I could fly through the air, be invisible, and perform magical acts, all of which took an enormous amount of my time, time that I preferred to spend alone so I could stay in my self-created world. As an adult, my fantasy life has taken on more mature attributes, including my seemingly never-ending quest to find a man who embodies all of the most desirable traits that I lack, and then somehow acquire those traits, or at least admire and enjoy them, by being near him, even in a sexual way. I am weary of this fantasy.

Weariness eventually leads to sin, simply because it weakens a person to the point that self-control and even self-respect take too much energy to sustain. We may be willing in our hearts to avoid sin, but our weak bodies strain and fall under the weight of weariness (see Mt 26:41). At our most weary and weak moments, temptation appears to offer an open door to relief, and it is hard to care about continuing the fight against our vices. The command, "Fight the

faith (1 Tim 6:12)" becomes more than is humanly possible. It is then that Jesus says, "Come to me (Mt 11:28)." Whatever it is that brings weariness upon your soul and body, Jesus promises to bring rest and lighten the burden (Mt 11:28-30). This is true relief for a sinner in need of a savior.

Most of my fantasies come to naught, but the one that will come true, the one I hold in my heart, is the vision of Jesus someday holding me in his loving arms. However, I have a life to live before then, as do all Christians. So, as Paul urges, we are to fill our thoughts with the truth and beauty of Jesus' message, then we can unload our weariness right now and start resting in the Lord today (see Phil 4:8-9).



(Protecting Ourselves... continued from page 3)

get out, or distance themselves, when a relationship demands too much time and energy. They flirt a lot and enjoy being seductive, yet are surprised when they receive sexual advances from the opposite sex and wonder why the person is attracted.

Partiers in recovery will describe their style by saying something like, “I operated under the assumption that if I gave you a reason to shun me or hate me it was better than longing for involvement and not getting it. I enmeshed [with] people by taking from them and trying to be all they wanted, all the time hating them for never giving me what I wanted.”

All of us can identify to some degree with the Partiers, Toughies, and Goodie Two Shoes. We all know what it is to be afraid to let people see the real us. In his book, Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I am, the author, John Powell, answers his own question by saying “Because if I tell you who I am, and you reject me, then I don’t have anything left.” So, we are careful as we walk through life, protecting ourselves from hurt. Even about Jesus it was said, “He trusted himself to no man for he knew what was in their hearts.”

The styles of relating Allender has identified are fortresses behind which survivors of abuse hide. They protect themselves from pain, but also deprive themselves of the joy of relationship God intended for us. These rigid styles of relating must be re-

placed with a discovery of who God created us to be, and how he intends us to be with one another.

In WGA support groups, that is always the primary goal—to discover who God created us to be and how he intends us to be with one another. Only He alone knows the fundamental truth about us, so we pursue Him who is the Truth; we pursue Him who is the Way to healing; we pursue Him who is the Life for which we all desperately long.

This article was modified and updated from a previous article When the Unthinkable Happens, which originally appeared in the September 1999 issue of A Measure of Grace.



Sy Rogers, Featured Speaker

April 2-3

Where Grace Abounds has invited Sy Rogers to speak at two events in the spring of 2004. Regarded as a gifted international communicator, award-winning talk show host, recording artist and pastor, Sy has served for over two decades in ministry, and 17 years as a pastoral care specialist regarding sexuality. Mark you calendars and call the WGA office if you need more information. Plan to join us!



Sexuality and the Church 2004

The morning of April 2nd

This event is structured for people who wish to learn more about how to minister to those struggling with sexual and relational issues. Make it a point to invite your pastor!

Brochures are available from the WGA office.

WGA Seminar

Friday evening, April 2nd and Saturday April 3rd

This seminar will address issues of sexuality and relational brokenness and is open to everyone! Contact the WGA office for a brochure.

You're Invited!

A Retreat for Family & Friends

June 25th-27th, 2004

WGA will be hosting a retreat for family and friends in the spring. Mark the date on your calendars. More information will be available soon. If you are interested in attending, please contact the WGA office at 303-863-7757 or email us at wwga@aol.com.

))) **JANUARY**)))

Thursday Night Group

January 1st—New Year's Day
 January 8th - 47 people
 January 15th - 37 people
 January 22nd - 58 people
 January 29th - 58 people
 Orientation meeting - 7 new people

Discipleship Counseling and Mentoring

The WGA staff provided about 13 hours of discipleship counseling and mentoring each week during January.

January 9th - Six month Commitment Group began with 7 men.

January 10th - Six month Survivors of Abuse Group began with 8 men and women.

January 25th - Presented in the main service at Celebration Church

))) **UPCOMING EVENTS**)))

February 8, 15, 22nd - Speaking to youth at Broomfield Home Church

February 8 - Presentation during services at Trinity Presbyterian Church

February 12 - 14th - Christian Ministries Convention, WGA booth and speaking.

February 22nd - Presentation at St. Ambrose Episcopalian Church

February 25th - Presenting to youth at Cherry Creek Presbyterian Church

April 2-3 - Redeemed Sexuality Seminar

April 22-24 - Restoring the Glory Conference at First Presbyterian in Boulder.

WGA Staff

Mary Heathman
 Executive Director

Program Department

Scott Kingry

Program Director

Pat Bott

Assistant Program Director

Operations Department

Roger Jones

Operations Director

Sheila Knudtsen

Resource Development

Purpose Statement

Where Grace Abounds exists to guide and support men and women who seek to understand sexuality and relationship, and to inspire all people to know and personally appropriate God's plan for their sexuality and relationships.



A Measure of Grace
 is edited by
 Elodie Ballantine Emig.

Printed in the USA
 Copyright 2004